

I firmly believe that a story in our Newsletter can, may, sometimes must, be based on current events.

The dramatic shooting incident in Nova Scotia is such a topical fact.

Without ignoring the sadness of other victims and ignoring the grief of their relatives, the death of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police hit several people in the Netherlands extra. Among them many Comrades from RCL Branch 005.

Heidi Stevenson attended the Liberation parade in Apeldoorn in 2000. A striking appearance in the characteristic uniform of the RCMP, namely the only female representative of the corps at the time.

(Click on photo for video of RCMP tribute) →



Parade Apeldoorn, 2000

On Sunday, April 19, 2020, she answered the call for duty in connection with a shooting incident.

Loyal until death appears is an expression that is sometimes used too easily. It happened to Heidi Stevenson.

May she rest in peace.



Apeldoorn, 2000

Constable Heidi Stevenson, married, two children, served in the Corps for 23 years. She previously worked as a school liaison officer. Former colleagues shared a photograph of her crossing a street with a group of smiling children.



Foto: RCMP Nova Scotia/Reuters

The duty of a member of the RCMP made me curious. A little more information about the corps seemed desirable to me. Also, in the period, now more than 75 years ago; the years of World War II. Very little mentioned but interesting enough for some research. Finally, images from those days showed soldiers who we called "military police".



In this English version of our Newsletter I do not have to explain what RCMP stands for nor mention its tasks. All members of the RCMP have jurisdiction as a peace officer in all parts of Canada, including Ontario and Quebec. Despite the name, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is no longer an actual mounted police force, with horses only being used at ceremonial events.

Among each other, the Mounties usually call their corps "The Force" and the agents are simply called "Members".

Prior to the beginning of the Second World War, the state of the Military Police in Canada was limited to a few locally appointed Regimental and Garrison Police. The Canadian Army mobilisation plan envisioned a single infantry division for overseas service and allotted a Provost Company for the division. Serving Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were applying to their Commissioner for release, in order to join the Canadian Active Service Force.



Camp Borden, 1916

Shortly after the Declaration of War, authority was granted by the Government to recruit a maximum of 120 volunteers from the RCMP. The new unit would be titled No.1 Provost Company (RCMP). Initially, 116 members of the RCMP were accepted for service. With over half of its members eventually being commissioned, No. 1 Provost Company became the nucleus of a truly elite branch of the Canadian military. Due to the number of RCMP Members requesting discharge in order to join the CASF, in 1940 the RCMP Commissioner forbid further transfers.

Many RCMP Members joined the Canadian military during the war, upon the expiration of their contracts with the RCMP.

Ultimately, 215 Members of the RCMP served with No. 1 CProC Company.



WWII.

For most of 1940, 1 Provost Company was stationed in England, but was involved in the battles during the fall of France (Brest, Laval, Sable and Chateaubriant).

The Canadian Provost Corps Training Centre operated from November 1942 to May 1946, training a total of 1,897 all ranks.

During World War II, most of the Canadian Army in England was stationed at Aldershot.



Maintenance + repair instruction



Motorcycle driving lesson

Canadian MPs wore red-topped caps and were armed with .38 revolvers carried in a holster on the left hip together with white pattern 1937 web belt, brace and brace attachment in the same manner as the British Corps of Military Police (CMP).

The corps saw action for the first time on 18 August 1942 in [the Dieppe Raid](#). Of the 41 members who took part, 22 returned to England, one was killed, eighteen were taken prisoner (seven of them being wounded).

During 1943, 1 Provost Company became involved in operations in Sicily (Pachino, Valguarnera, Assoro, Agira, Adrano and Regalbuto).

After the crossing into Italy on 3 September 1943, the company continued its support of the 1st Canadian Corps as part of the Eighth Army as Allied forces crept northwards from the toe of Italy. Places where 1 Provost Company saw action included: Campobasso, Torella, Motta Montecorvino, San Leonardo, The Gully, and Ortona in 1943.

San Nicola, San Tommaso, Cassino II, the Gustav Line, the Liri Valley, the Hitler Line, and Got Lamone Crossing in 1944; and Misano Ridge, Rimini Line, San Martino, San Lorenzo, and Fosso Vecchio in 1945.

In the Cassino area of Italy, the Canadian Provost assisted the British CMP on "Highway 6", where 11,000 vehicles were handled every day. The Canadians were part of twenty-four provost and traffic control companies and two Special Investigation Branch sections that were attached to the Eighth Army.



*LCp D.G. Stackhouse, Campobasso, Oct. 1943. KIA 31-05-1944
Hit a Teller mine with his motorcycle*



Obviously, the members of the corps were well-trained, disciplined military personnel.



LCp Don Fife, en route to Falaise, Aug. 1944



They also followed the guidelines: take care of your weapon, yourself, eat and rest as you have the opportunity.

Bill Baggott at least puts the latter into practice.

Lance-Corporal Bill Baggott sleeping on his motorcycle, Falaise, France, 14 August 1944. (Library and Archives Canada Photo, MIKAN No. 3225761)

It goes without saying that men from the RCMP were also on Dutch territory during WW2.

On the [website of Harold A. Skaarup](#) we found a number of photos that are worth publishing.



Private H.E. Easterbrook and Lance-Corporal T. Mudd, both of No. 5 Provost Company, Canadian Provost Corps (C.P.C.), riding special grey horses at a Thanksgiving church service and parade, Groningen, Netherlands, 19 August 1945. (Library and Archives Canada Photo, MIKAN No. 3524773)



Lance-Corporals J. Lang and P.C. Ajas of No.1 Provost Company, Canadian Provost Corps guarding German Biber mini-submarines, Ijmuiden, Netherlands, 25 May 1945. (Library and Archives Canada Photo, MIKAN No. 3211661)

On 18 October 1945, 1 Provost Company was de-activated when it was repatriated to Canada. By September 1945, the C Pro C numbered 6,120 men.

The corps members were not only deployed in the army. A section was also assigned to the Navy and a number were seconded to the Air Force. Two men were killed in a crash in Ireland.

To return to the opening of this column: of course they were also in Apeldoorn.



General H.D.G. Crerar, General Officer Commanding 1st Canadian Army, and Captain C.B. Newman, Assistant Provost Marshal, 4th Canadian Armoured Division, inspecting a company of the Canadian Provost Corps, Apeldoorn, Netherlands, 12 July 1945. (Library and Archives Canada Photo, MIKAN No. 3409562)

123 C Pro C members died in the Service of Canada during the Second World War. In 1946, the strength of the C Pro C was reduced to 117.

To bring this column back to the present tense, the following:

The RCMP Pipes & Drums Band was formed in 2000. Currently official: Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipes, Drums and Dancers of the National Division

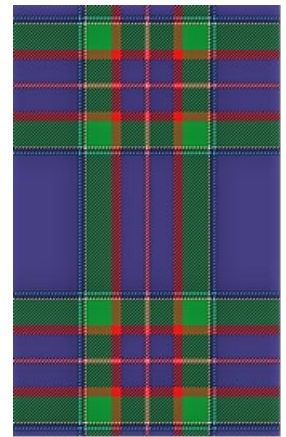
The National Division Pipes, Drums and Dancers is one of 8 bands from coast to coast that form the RCMP Community Bands of Pipes and Drums in Canada. The design was approved by RCMP Commissioner Phil Murray in 1998, the same year that the RCMP tartan was unveiled. It was designed in 1997 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the RCMP.

About 250 individuals from all over Canada, all volunteers and from the ranks of citizens and ordinary members of the RCMP and various other professions. After audition and selection through a rigorous process, they all represent the corps.

The dance group is formed by fifteen ladies, selected for their skill in Highland dancing. Do not underestimate it, their dancing skills are subject to high demands.

The group performs five to eight times a year. The premise is to build public relations for the police and promote the solidarity of Canadians across the country. Not an unknown group in the Netherlands either. They were here on the occasion of 70 years of Freedom.

Below a picture from that year in Posterenk. For video images of their performance there you can click on the photo.



RCMP-tartan



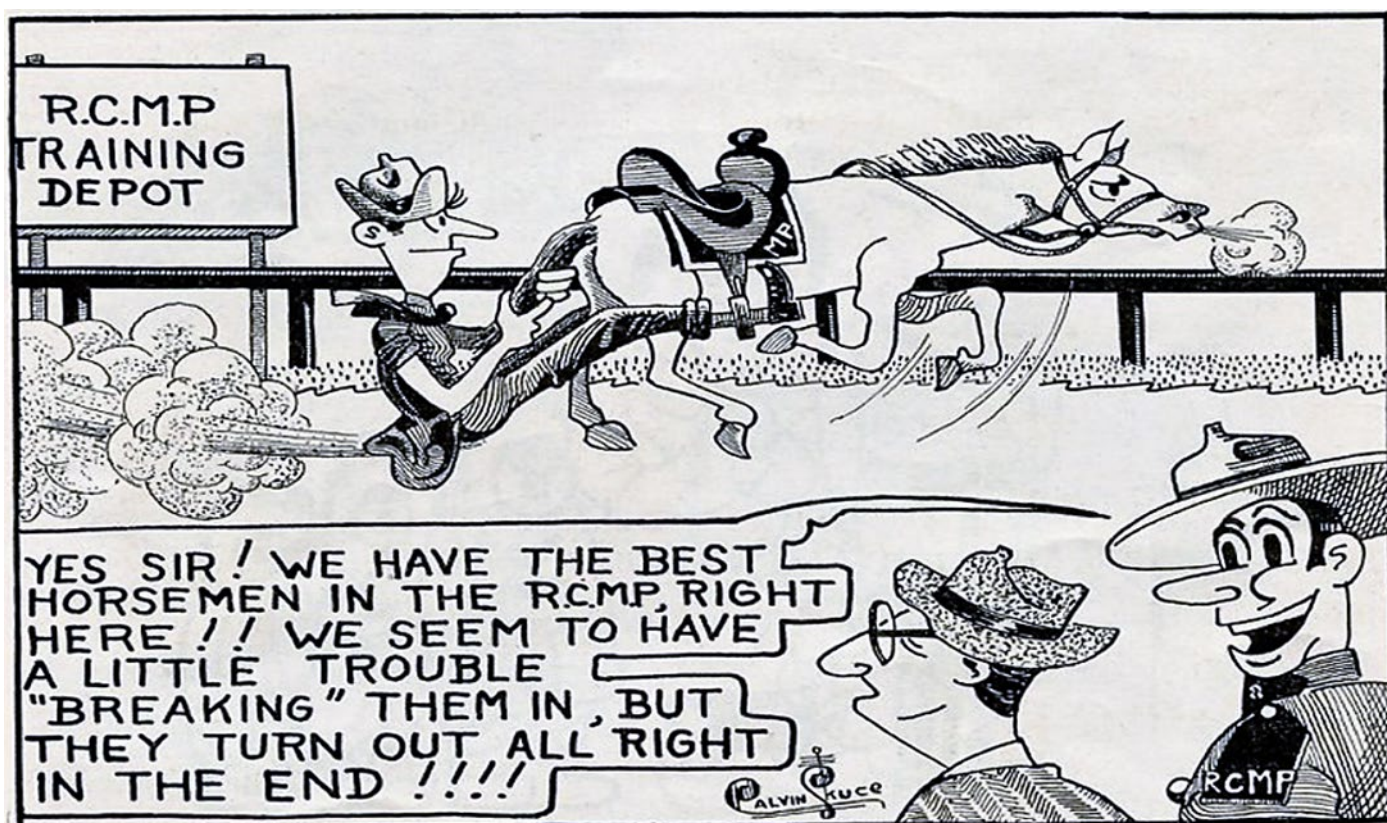
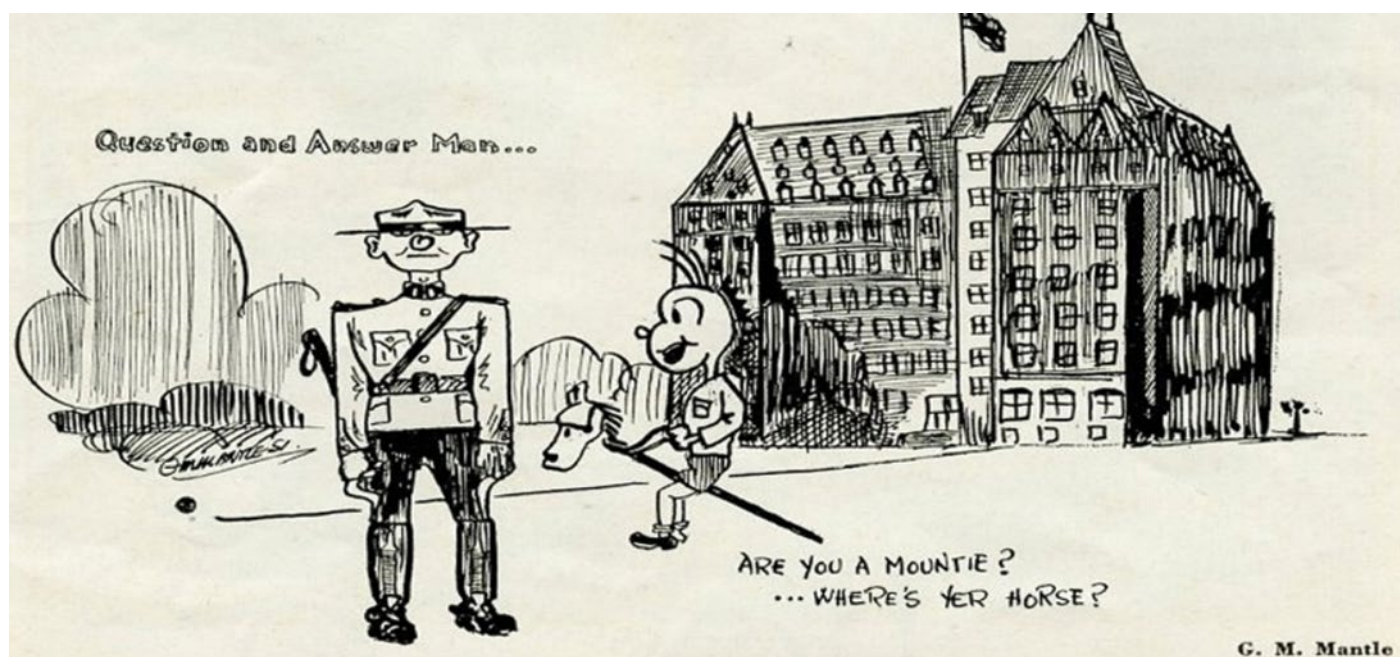
They would have liked to combine their 20th anniversary with a visit to the Netherlands to take part in the celebration of 75 years Liberation of the Netherlands.

It turned out differently, COVID-19 caused a nasty dissonance.

Can we look forward to a 75 + 1 visit?



In conclusion, a few pictures showing that a renowned and respected corps like the RCMP can also be the subject of cartoons and how great the Mountie + Horse association is.



Column: Herman Sligman

Bronnen: Wikipedia, Harold A. Skaarup Webpage, www.rcmpolice.ca